

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2953

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 0665

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FOR ARA ASST. SEC. ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR

EO: 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CO

SUBJ: POSSIBLE VISIT TO LATIN AMERICA BY SECRETARY

1. THIS MORNING'S PRESS PUBLISHED A WASHINGTON AP STORY THAT THE SECRETARY WOULD VISIT LATIN AMERICA "ABOUT FEBRUARY 16", AND MENTIONS VENEZUELA, BRAZIL AND SAN JOSE, WHERE HE WOULD MEET CENTRAL AMERICAN FOREIGN MINISTERS. I DO NOT KNOW IF THIS IS CORRECT AND IF SO WHETHER OTHER COUNTRIES ARE IN THE ITINERARY. IF A LA TRIP IS PLANNED THEN I WANT MOST EARNESTLY AND URGENTLY TO ASK YOU TO TRY AND PERSUADE THE SECRETARY TO INCLUDE BOGOTA IF IT IS NOT NOW IN THE PLANS, IF ONLY FOR A 24-HOUR STOP (OR EVEN LESS IF NECESSARY). MY REASONS ARE THE FOLLOWING:

A) THE FACT THAT LOPEZ VISITED WASHINGTON IN SEPTEMBER WAS GOOD ENOUGH TO EXCUSE COLOMBIA FROM A TRIP WHEN THAT TRIP WAS PLANNED LAST NOVEMBER. NOW THAT WE HAVE DISTANCED OURSELVES IN TIME, EVEN BY JUST THE FEW MONTHS THAT HAVE TRANSPIRED, THE EXACT REVERSE IS TRUE. LOPEZ AND LIEVANO FEEL THAT THEY HAVE ESTABLISHED A GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SECRETARY. THEY ARE VERY FOND OF AND IMPRESSED WITH THE SECRETARY, AND THEY ARE PROUD OF THE CONNECTION THEY FEEL THEY HAVE WITH HIM. IF THE SECRETARY NOW LANDS ALL AROUND BOGOTA AND DOES NOT COME HERE THEY WILL TAKE IT PERSONALLY AND IT WILL AFFECT THE WARMTH AND RESPONSIVENESS WITH WHICH THEY NOW REACT TO US. JUST ENOUGH TIME HAS PASSED SINCE THE STATE VISIT TO MAKE IT UNUSEABLE AS AN EXPLANATION TO THEIR COUNTRYMEN AND THE HEMISPHERE WHY THE SECRETARY DID

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TION TO THEIR COUNTRYMEN AND THE HEMISPHERE WHY THE SECRETARY DID

NOT COME. ON THE CONTRARY, THE VISIT IS JUST RECENT ENOUGH TO CALL ATTENTION TO AND MAKE EMBARRASSING ANY ABSENCE OF BOGOTA FROM THE TRIP. I ASSURE YOU VERY SINCERELY THAT LIEVANO AND LOPEZ WOULD FEEL HURT. MOST OF WHAT WE GAINED WITH THE STATE VISIT LAST FALL, WE WOULD LOSE.

B) THERE ARE SUBSTANTIVE REASONS TO SEE LIEVANO AND LOPEZ AGAIN AND SUBSTANTIVE THINGS TO TALK ABOUT: (1) ONE IS PANAMA. TORRIJOS CONTINUES TO SEEK OUT LOPEZ AND LOPEZ STILL HAS SUBSTANTIAL INFLUENCE WITH HIM; TORRIJOS AS YOU KNOW CAME ALMOST DIRECTLY HERE FOR A VISIT AFTER HIS CUBAN TRIP. LOPEZ IS AS GOOD IF NOT BETTER AN ADVOCATE FOR US WITH TORRIJOS THAN CARLOS ANDRES. IF THE SECRETARY ASKS HIM TO DO SOMETHING, HE WILL. (2) WE ARE AS YOU KNOW MOVING INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED NARCOTICS AID AND COOPERATION; LOPEZ HAS BEEN MOST FORTHCOMING IN ASSURING COOPERATION. THIS IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR THE SECRETARY TO DEMONSTRATE OUR CONCERN AND TO SHOW TO LOPEZ OUR APPRECIATION FOR HIS RESPONSIVENESS (AND TO REINFORCE IT) WITH REGARD TO A PROBLEM THAT IS INCREASINGLY OF CONCERN TO PRESIDENT FORD, TO THE NATION AND TO OUR PEOPLE. (3) COLOMBIA HAS JUST PLAYED A CONSTRUCTIVE AND MODERATING ROLE IN SELA (BOGOTA 662), PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN THE ANDEAN PACT AND IS A STRONG CONSTRUCTIVE VOICE GENERALLY IN HEMISPHERE ECONOMIC AND TRADE MATTERS. THIS IS ANOTHER CHANCE BOTH TO SHOW THEM WE APPRECIATE IT AND TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE FURTHER COOPERATION IN MTN, ETC. (4) LIEVANO AS YOU KNOW HAS BEEN MOST HELPFUL IN OAS MATTERS AND IS PREPARED TO HELP US IN THE FUTURE WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO REFORM. THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE HIM OUR FURTHER VIEWS ON THIS AND EVEN TO ASK HIM TO DO THINGS FOR US. THE HONOR DONE FACIO BY THE CHOICE OF SAN JOSE FOR THE CA STOP, IF THAT IS THE CASE, WILL NOT BE LOST ON LIEVANO, WHO I AGAIN REPEAT WILL FEEL SNUBBED IF HE IS NOT ON THE VISIT LIST.

2. IN SHORT, COLOMBIA IS BIG AND IMPORTANT IN LA; IT IS CAPABLE OF BEING VERY HELPFUL TO US IN A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC ISSUES AND PROBLEMS; THE SECRETARY'S PERSONAL STANDING WITH LOPEZ/LIEVANO IS EXTREMELY HIGH AND HE IS LITERALLY ABLE TO SECURE COOPERATION AND FRIENDSHIP FOR THE ASKING. FAILURE TO INCLUDE BOGOTA WILL HIT THE COLOMBIANS WHERE THEY HURT THE MOST--IN THEIR PERSONAL DIGNITY, PRIDE AND THEIR VALUE OF PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP--AND WE

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RISK LOSING A GREAT DEAL WHICH WE CANNOT OVERCOME NOW WITH THE ARGUMENT THAT THE STATE VISIT WAS SO RECENT. ON THE CONTRARY, JUST ENOUGH TIME HAS PASSED TO EXACERBATE THE SENSITIVITY RATHER THAN LOWER IT. EVEN A SHORT VISIT OF 24 HOURS WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO NOTHING AT ALL.

3. I THEREFORE URGE YOU AS FORCEFULLY AS I CAN TO CONSIDER A COLOMBIAN STOP, IF THE VISIT IS TO MATERIALIZE, AND I WOULD AP-

PRECATE IT IF YOU WOULD CONVEY TO THE SECRETARY MY VERY STRONGLY
HELD VIEWS AND EARNEST RECOMMENDATION TO THAT EFFECT FOR THE REASONS
OUTLINED ABOVE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, MINISTERIAL VISITS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BOGOTA00665
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: OA
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P850107-1906
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760138/aaaabhms.tel
Line Count: 119
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 JUL 2004 by MartinML>; APPROVED <26 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POSSIBLE VISIT TO LATIN AMERICA BY SECRETARY
TAGS: PFOR, PREL, OVIP, CO, US, XM, (KISSINGER, HENRY A)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006